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The Apple Law Now Before Congress

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:
Sir,—I agree with Mr. Moomaw that the action to be taken on the Sulzer bill is a matter of great importance to the fruit-growers of Virginia, but with other views expressed in his article I beg respectfully to disagree.

The fruit-growers of Albemarle and Nelson counties, with other Piedmont orchardists, are growing the finest fruit in the United States and much of it is exported, our chief competitor being Canada. The apples of the latter country are not so high in quality as ours, but their grading and packing is very fine, due to a law on their statute books based upon honest, fair dealing and scientific principles. We wish such a law in Virginia, but we are opposed to the law now before Congress for the following reasons:

1. It is not honest. It legalizes a pack that deceives the consumer and is criminal under the law of Canada. It makes the United States government approve a barrel faced with a large, fine apple while the rest is packed with small and inferior fruit and stamp it "U. S. Standard A," the highest grade.

2. It is a distinct attempt by New York buyers and packers to lower the grading of fruit. The grading of the United States standard is much lower than that of the Canada law, and its effect would be to put our fine fruit at a disadvantage when sold in foreign markets. It allows "U. S. Standard A" to contain more than one bushel in every barrel of rotten, wormy or decayed apples, when Virginia growers have been training their packers to exclude from their first grade every single apple which has one of these defects.

Another serious error which will at first deceive the consumer and then absolutely destroy confidence in the United States standard is the fact that there is no limit to the smallest size with which a barrel can be packed; and the consumer will never know from the stamp what size he is going to get. For instance, a consumer buys a barrel marked "U. S. Standard A" and finds a few small and one-half inch apples, but the rest of good size and he is well pleased. He buys another barrel of the same variety, also marked "U. S. Standard A," and finds it to get about the same size fruit, but he finds not one good-sized apple in the barrel, the whole barrel packed with little two and one-half inch apples. Under this law "U. S. Standard A" can be stamped on a barrel double-packed with small and one-half inch apples, and then down beneath a little two and one-half inch fellows and more than a peck of them wormy, smelly, and rotten apples.

This law is a distinct effort to deceive with respectability a low, "bum" pack that is essentially lacking in respectability. Why cannot the United States "stand for" as high a law as the Canadian live up to? And why should we Piedmont people go into markets abroad with our government stamp upon our barrel which the foreigner would consider a badge of positive disgrace—"a Yankee trick," a thing of which our English customers have almost a superstitious dread?

3. Another absurdity in the bill is that the judges of fruit under the law are to be the fruit growers, a bureau of chemistry? These gentlemen who "cave in" the ninth part of a hair, use microscopes and weigh scales, and then come to the conclusion, would not know a "hawk from a hand saw." Of course the division of pomology should have this matter in hand.

4. The bill contains no appropriation, provides for no inspectors nor for any adequate method for enforcing the law. "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out.

5. So much for the general objections to the bill. In two matters it is grossly unjust to Piedmont Virginia and with reason great loss to us. The first of these is in the lack of scientific classification, the bungling generalization of the bill. There are two distinct classes of apples recognized everywhere, by all growers and by all buyers, the large apple, such as for instance as the Albemarle Pippin and the York Imperial, the first grade of which runs from two and one-half inches in diameter up, and such apples as the Winesap and Jonathan, which in the first grade run from two and one-half inches and up. This bill forces us to put a considerable part of our first grade Winesaps into the second grade and sell them at a loss. In other words, this law, while stamping a barrel of Ben Davis first grade or "A" force us to stamp Winesap apple second grade or "B," which have always heretofore sold as first grade, and this simply because the Winesap does not grow as big as a Ben Davis, and the framers of the law are too lazy or too ignorant of horticultural matters to make a proper classification.

Another most unreasonable injury is done us by the size of the barrel which this law forces upon the Virginia apple barrel standard by law in Virginia is a three bushel barrel, the same size as the legal Canada barrel, so that with our Virginia barrel we stand on an equal footing with our principal competitor in the foreign market.

The apple buyers of New York are trying to force upon us a barrel that holds from eight to eleven quarts more than the Virginia or Canada barrel. This might be borne by the New York buyers, who might wish to repack our barrels in boxes as some do, but it would entail a great loss to Virginia fruit growers, for the fact was admitted by the sponsors for this bill that a barrel is a barrel in the market, and the difference in size would bring the growers in more money, and we would be simply presenting the foreigners with the difference between the New York barrel and the Virginia and Canadian barrels—about \$50 in every hundred barrels, \$500 on every 1,000, and \$5,000 on every 10,000 barrels. Our loss from this source alone would be enormous. Moreover, the Virginia apple barrel is common in the United States, and the best staves are used for four barrels, the No. 2 staves for apple barrels. If the barrel is changed as proposed and Virginia is forced to give up its legal barrel, then the cooper who has put his higher priced staves into apple barrels and the grower and consumer will pay the difference. This law will also raise freight once more, and the cost to the people who have to haul many miles, as in Nelson and Rappahannock, will be greatly increased. These good reasons for adopting the Virginia barrel standard by law in Virginia as the United States standard impressed some of the members of the United States congressional committee, and there was absolutely no reason given for the adoption of the New York barrel except the bold statement that Mr. Moomaw repeats, that 20 per cent of the apple growers in the United States use the New York apple barrel. These gentlemen have made a great mistake in this assumption. There is absolutely no such proportion as they imagine. A number of other States have the same standard barrel as Virginia. The witnesses for the New York buyers and commission men testified that the change would make no material difference in the cost to New York cooper. Compare this with the loss to the people of the growers who export in competition with Canada.

The Virginia Cast people, who are the best graders and packers in the country, would have none of this law, so a compromise was effected and they were left out. Let us go forward, not backward, and have a good law, good enough for Oregon and Virginia, but not let the United States standard be set by any such crude, undigested fact as this House bill No. 21480. I do not mean to impugn any one's motives in pressing this bill, but it is easy to see that while it would do the grower of apples who is putting up a good barrel a good and honest pack, it would put the biggest sort of a big stick in the hands of a dishonest buyer or grower who would feel its effect.

Mr. Moomaw refers to the Virginia State Horticultural Society and the fact that certain Virginia growers endeavored to create the impression that in opposing this bill they represented the society. I called the attention of the committee to the only resolution adopted by the society at its last meeting at Harrisonburg in which the Horticultural Society approved the Virginia standard apple barrel and asked Congress to have it made the standard barrel of the United States. The State society did not approve of the Sulzer bill. Our action in standing by the Virginia law is representing the view of the Virginia State Horticultural Society. Furthermore, while the executive committee did approve the Sulzer bill, the members present at the committee, I know that Mr. Whately, the secretary, Mr. Woolen, the treasurer, and Mr. McCue, all members of the executive committee, do not agree with such action and are opposed to the Sulzer bill. These are the only members of the board to whom I have the honor to refer. The committee of the State society will not endorse this bill, and I believe that upon a full hearing the executive committee would reconsider its action. If Congress should favorably upon our amendment the Virginia standard barrel becomes the standard barrel of the United States, which is a mistake in my opinion. Mr. Moomaw is mistaken in supposing that when the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures recommends a measure, be it a barrel or a bushel, and Congress adopts it as the standard measure, any State can use any other barrel. The Constitution of the United States confers the exclusive power on Congress to coin money and establish weights and measures, and whenever it acts the right is thereby taken from every State to legislate a like matter. Virginia would then have just as much right to coin gold dollars as to make apple barrels according to Virginia law. We have been told by the advocates of this bill that it is only "permissive" and that we can still continue to use the Virginia legal barrel. Let us not confuse the issue. It cannot be done. The law is not permissive. We were told that no amendments could be offered and this is true. These statements and other unwarranted statements were made to the executive committee

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Sunday Services In City Churches

Unless otherwise noted in this column, usual services will be conducted at customary hours by regular pastors of local churches.

This is the day which the National Anti-Tuberculosis Association has asked to be set aside as "Tuberculosis Sunday." In answer to this request, many of the city ministers will preach to-day on the cure and prevention of tuberculosis. Free literature on the subject has been furnished by the Virginia Anti-Tuberculosis Association, and will be distributed after the service.

To the colored congregations particularly the message will be carried to-day. Every colored minister of Richmond has consented to have a physician enter his pulpit and explain to his congregation the dreadful ravages of the disease, and the ways it can be prevented and cured.

West End Methodist Church, Rev. Charles H. Taylor, pastor, morning subject, "Every Christian a Winner for Christ." This is the fourth of a series of evangelistic sermons which the pastor is delivering.

In the Fairmount Christian Church the revival services which are now going on will be continued. The pastor, the Rev. L. E. Greenhouse, will be assisted by the Rev. Burleigh A. Wines for Christ. "Encouragements to Christian Work," night, "The Purpose of the Transfiguration."

In the Second Presbyterian Church the Rev. Russell Codd, D. D., will preach at 11 and 5 o'clock. Sunday school services at 9:45 o'clock.

The Rev. W. J. Young, D. D., will preach twice in the Centenary Methodist Church. Morning subject, "The Power of the Spirit for Special Service." During the week the Rev. B. T. Waterfield will preach, and Miss Lucy Gwynn, of Centenary church, will sing.

The Rev. H. D. C. Marshman, D. D., pastor, will preach at 8 o'clock in the Seventh Street Church on the subject, "The Christian and His City." He will have something to say in regard to the coming election of the Administrative Board.

The ninety-third anniversary of the United Methodist Order of Odd-Fellows will be celebrated in the Leigh Street Baptist Church at 11 o'clock by the Rev. J. J. Wicker. The three lodges will assemble at 10 o'clock in their respective lodges rooms, the line form.

ing at Twenty-fifth and Marshall Streets, to induct the church.

The Boys' Sunday Afternoon Club of the Central Young Men's Christian Association will have as the speaker this afternoon a former railroad engineer, who will deliver an address on "The Railroad Engineer," one of a series of addresses on "Careers of Interest."

The Rev. Thomas Semmes will address the men's meeting this afternoon in the Young Men's Christian Association auditorium. His subject will be "Non-conductors." This will be Mr. Semmes' last address under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A.

The men's meeting under the auspices of the colored Young Men's Christian Association will be addressed this afternoon in Johnson's Hall by the Rev. W. H. White, pastor of the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, on the subject "Ten Little" Joseph Woolfolk will sing.

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Mrs. J. W. Howell, of Danville, matron in chief for the Virginia Division, United Sons of Confederate Veterans, at the Masonic Building, Mrs. Howell is the wife of J. W. Howell, of Danville, a prominent attorney of that city. For several seasons she has been the leader of the social set at the Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, and enjoys much social prominence in Danville among the younger matrons. Miss Kate Green, of Wytheville, is the sponsor, and Miss G. Morgan, of Norfolk, and Miss Beale Ridley, of Portsmouth, are the maids of honor for the United Sons of Confederate Veterans.

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